NORTHWEST ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH NOTES

Early Culture Contact on the Northwest Coast, 1774-1795:
Analysis of Spanish Source Material ..... Mary Gormly 1

Abstracts of Papers Presented at the 29th Annual Meeting
of the Northwest Anthropological Conference 81

A Hominologist's View from Moscow, USSR ..... Dmitri Bayonov 128

SPRING 1977

Vol. 11, No. 1

A HOMINOLOGIST'S VIEW FROM MOSCOW, USSR

DMITRI BAYANOV
Darwin Museum

The following comments, kindly offered for publication were received in letter form, July 1976 by one of the editors (RS) in response to copies of *NARN* reprints sent to Dmitri Bayanov and Igor Bourtsev.

Thank you very much for the *NARN* materials you sent to us. Some of the articles - those by Grover Krantz and Wayne Suttles - we received before from other colleagues and discussed at our seminar, while those by Bruce Rigsby and Gordon Strasenburgh are new to us and are scheduled for discusion.

It is also the first time that I have seen and can appreciate your Editorial, which started it all in *NARN*. I must say it is written in the best and noblest tradition of scientific inquiry. Fruits of science can be used to harm man, but the spirit of science, which is revealed in your editorial, can only be of the greatest service to mankind.

It is also gratifying to learn that you were influenced by Green's reference to the editors of *Soviet Ethnography* who found it possible to publish an article by Boris Porshnev (1969) on the problem of relict hominoids. As a Russian poet put it: "We aren't given to divine how our word will echo." The echo in this case turned out to be fine and still reverberating. In fact, it was the only echo of the article that I know of, since those whom Porshnev addressed here with his publications on the subject invariably greeted them with utter silence.

No matter, we have survived, along with the hominoids, and are gaining ground. In this connection, I would like to elaborate on or even correct one statement by Strasenburgh (1975:282), namely "...the surviving Hominoid Problem Seminar, composed of interested laymen who meet at the Darwin Museum in Moscow... ." His saying that our seminar is composed of laymen implies contrasting it with a group of professionals. I wonder what professionals Strasenburgh has in mind in this case.

We have many members with higher education (average attendance is 25 people and we meet monthly, except summer vacation time), several are biologists, with zoologists among them. The late Pyotr Smolin (he died last September), the founder of the seminar, was one of the most versatile biologists and eminent zoologists of this country. It is true that physical anthropologists are conspicuous by their absence in our ranks, through no fault of ours. That is why we welcome so much and appreciate Krantz's work on the subject. But does it give ground to say that our seminar is composed of laymen? As Strasenburgh (1975:281) himself has aptly observed, "the majority of scientists who have been quoted in the media regarding the subject simply do not know what they are talking about." Since they do not, and we do, who are the laymen in the field then?

It is true none of us can work full time on the subject for the simple reason that *all* our research is done free, and man, alas, cannot live by thought alone. But still there are more appropriate names than "laymen" for such enthusiasts.

My name is "hominologists." Though we often use it in jest, I would like to stress some of its serious implications. In a letter to John Napier I wrote in 1973: "The living missing link is 'unknown' to science because there is no science to know it." Indeed, between zoology and anthropology there is a big gap in knowledge, a no-man's land of science, in which the hominoid is securely hidden from the eyes of orthodox scientists. This situation is caused both by the history of science (the young age of the current evolutionary theory which alone could have shed true light on the nature of hominoids) and by the characteristics of the hominoids themselves (their resemblance to man in appearance and to animals in behavior, their love-hate relationship with man, etc.). The study of relict hominoids reveals not only their reality but a new kind of reality in general. Since hominoids are different both from the apes and *Homo sapiens*, their study constitutes a legitimate branch of knowledge which deserves a name of its own. Hence the birth of *hominology*, as a branch of primatology, called upon to bridge the gap between zoology and anthropology, which task is in full accord with the work and aspirations of Charles Darwin.

I cannot but agree with Strasenburgh that our studies must go on no matter whether a specimen is brought in or not. In fact, the inquiry into the theoretical and historical aspects of the problem is already so advanced that even if relict hominoids were no longer in existence today, there would be still enough sense and material for hominology to exist as an historical discipline. But they do exist, and this makes me view the situation in a somewhat different light than Strasenburgh does.

I think the hominologist is duty bound to have the hominoid recognized by science at large as soon as possible. The reason for my impatience is as follows.

There was a time when apes and monkeys were nothing but objects of amusement for man. Today we know better, and the non-human primates have become the subject of the most serious and valuable research. There can be little doubt that the study in vivo of non-human bipedal primates from the genetic, psychological, and medical points of view will be even more relevant to man's ever-present task of following the motto "Know thyself" than is the study of apes and monkeys. The hominoids may turn out to be as necessary for the health, and eventually very existence, of mankind as wild plants are necessary for the continued existence of agriculture.

They are potentially the most precious element of the environment, and it is by the man-enduced changes in the environment that their existence is put in jeopardy. To prove the point it is enough to recall the fate of hominoids in western Europe, where they disappeared, along with other species of wildlife, in historically recent time. A similar process, but at a much faster pace, is under way in other parts of the globe. Even if this process is stopped and reversed in the future, as has been the case with some threatened species, the disappearance in the meantime from the face of

earth of one or another local variety, not to mention species, of the hominoid will be a terrible loss in the inventory of life forms on the spaceship Earth. Hence we must act right now to prevent this from happening.

But having realized this we seem to land in the long familiar vicious circle: for science to protect the hominoid it must first recognize the creature's existence, and the creature's existence is thought to be unprovable without the funds resulting from such recognition. This is how Strasenburgh (1975:289) sees the dilemma:

> I think several million dollars spent toward obtaining a specimen is justified on the basis of the evidence we presently have. Anything less is likely to be a severe handicap. I am, however, aware that such a sum of money is beyond the means of those who are presently interested in the question, as well as those who might be potentially interested in it. So let us turn to the ethnographers and ethnologists and their lack of interest in the wild man myth.

But perhaps the dilemma is more apparent than real. Do we really need millions of dollars to lift the leaden eyelids of skeptics? It all depends on how we propose to go about it.

As my American colleagues well know, I am in principle against not only a killing, but any kind of violence to be used against the hominoid in the name and for the "good" of science. The idea of destroying or crippling anything to prove its existence, moreover such a formidable and awe-inspiring figure as a hominoid, seems unsavory to great many people; this writer included. Cannot *Homo sapiens* afford to be magnanimous enough to grant Most Favored Creature Status at least to his nearest kin in the animal kingdom? To quote George F. Haas (personal communication, 16 April 1975):

> Fortunately, there seems to be a growing trend in the West to recognize that animals and other forms of life have rights of their own; that they were not just "put here for the benefit of man" but are fellow passengers on the spaceship Earth through time and space and thus entitled to the respect and consideration due to any fellow traveler. Most of this trend seems to be due to the growing influence of eastern philosophies on our western cultures and I hope this trend continues.

Given this, the only alternative left to the hominologist, dreaming of meeting the hominoid in person, is making friendly contact with the creature. The feasibility of this hope is based on the following considerations. Both anthropologists and zoologists have rich experience in making friendly contact with objects of their study, from humans still living in the Stone Age to chimpanzees to wolves to crocodiles. No matter how unique the hominoids are, they cannot be so different from all other creatures as to be immune to man's friendly advances.

Moreover, we have indications that the ancients knew ways of making friends with hominoids, and there is reason to believe this "know-how" still lingers on and is used clandestinely by certain indigenous *conoscenti* here

and there in homi country (homi is our jargon for hominoid). In the early days of our research, namely in September 1959, a local old man in the Caucasus (in Daghestan) agreed to show a *kaptar* (popular name for the hominoid in Daghestan) to a group of hominologists which included Jeanne Koffmann of our group in Moscow and Yuri Merezhinsky of the Kiev University (Department of Ethnography and Anthropology), by taking them to a spot on a brook where *kaptar* used to bathe. The offer was made on the condition that no harm would be done to the creature.

The creature appeared as promised, but Merezhinsky did not keep his word and fired a pistol shot at it, which killed nothing but a priceless chance to attempt friendly contact with a hominoid (see Boris Porshnev 1968:112).

A unique and nearly successful attempt to make friends with a Bigfoot was made in June 1970 by Arthur Buckley of the Bay Area group in California headed by George Haas (personal communication, 16 April 1975). Says Haas of Buckley's attempt: "Nobody else has ever done it. His techniques should serve as models for all future attempts at making contact."

Before trying to answer the question why Buckley was not fully successful and why his, and similar, techniques are slow in catching on, let us put and answer the question: Will contact prove the existence of hominoids? My answer, just as Haas's, is: Yes, undoubtedly so. In his words, "...Anyone...viewing bigfoot films comparable to those made of the gorillas by Adrien Deschryver of eastern Zaire and denying their authenticity, would be a die-hard skeptic indeed." It can be added that there was no need to shoot or cage a Tasaday to prove the existence of that Stone Age tribe in the Philippines. As for physical evidence, such as bones or a carcass, given contact, we are as sure to obtain it eventually as both humans and homis are mortals.

Now, why this delay in putting into practice what Haas and I have been advocating? To better understand the answer first read what David A. Hamburg of Stanford University has to say in the foreward to Jane Goodall's book *In the shadow of man:*

> The difficulties of solving the mystery were formidable - many experts thought insurmountable. ...The chimps were not cooperative. They stayed away from her, kept her at a great distance. ...Four years passed before truly abundant observations were possible (Lawich-Goodall 1971:13-14).

Goodall's accomplishments are above any praise and a great inspiration to us. Yet, compared to our problem her task was facilitated at least by three important factors: 1) the chimpanzees are diurnus animals; 2) they lead a community life; and 3) Goodall's project had financial support during those crucial four years.

We can do nothing at present about the opposite of the first two factors in the hominoid, namely, his nocturnal life of a loner, except intensify the expression of our desire to make friends with him. Let us recall that in Goodall's case the ice was really broken when the chimps accepted offerings of bananas from her. Buckley used fish as the bait, making

bigfeet aware of his presence and good intentions with calls "in a friendly, encouraging voice."

On our side, I have worked out a technique, dubbed "braying bait method," which combines food baits, certain natural (animal) sounds, believed to beguile the hominoid, and a live herbivor, known to interest and attract the creature. The method has never been tried out, mainly because of the opposite of the third factor mentioned above: lack of funds.

Considering the handicaps of our problem, it may take more than four years of intensive attempts before contact is made. To increase the probability of being in the right place at the right time we better have not one but several or even many simultaneous attempts being made by separate investigators in separate places. And all of them have to be backed financially, if we do not want the baiters to eat their baits.

Thus, in the end, as Strasenburgh foresaw, it all boils down to the question of money. However, in my estimate the program, as I have described it, would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, not several million. The dividends would start coming as soon as photographic evidence would be obtainable. Yet, how to obtain funds to get the program off the ground?

One answer seems to be through international cooperation. What one country is shy to do on its own, may be bravely done by a community of countries or on a bilateral basis. The United States and the Soviet Union are actively engaged in environmental cooperation, having outlined "a program of research in the preserves which will be set up in deserts, mountains, and forests both in the Soviet Union and the United States. They will be used for the observation of air masses, soil, flora and fauna and the use of water resources." The quote is from a *TASS* report on a Soviet-American biospheric preserves symposium which was held in Moscow in May of 1976. The inclusion of a staff of hominologists into this program would seem to come in handy and at a negligible increase in its cost, considering the total sums involved. What is needed now is an understanding of the hominoid problem on the part of those concerned and the will to prod things in the right direction.

In a Moscow News article, entitled "Need for international cooperation in search for relic hominoids," René Dahinden said in 1972:

> If by way of international cooperation we manage to determine the quality of the material we possess as well as to evaluate the possibility and probability of the existence of the above-mentioned creatures in certain parts of the world, then we'll make a big step forward in solving the problem which I consider one of the greatest scientific problems of all time.

I am all for Dahinden's idea of international cooperation in this research and hope that we can not only make a big step forward by joining forces but finally solve the problem.

In conclusion, to reassure those who are tired of waiting for a quick solution, as well as those who insist that all we learn from history is that

we do not learn from history, I shall quote the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on the history of meteoritics, which bears a striking similarity to our case:

> History of Meteoritics. - Since very ancient times men have known about meteorites falling; however, the scientific study of meteorites is hardly older than 150 years. ... It was just this miraculous character of meteorite falls and the favour they found with the churches which, during the period of enlightenment, made scientists suspicious of their reality. In the 18th century members of the French Academy, then the highest authority in all scientific matters, were convinced that such an irregular phenomenon as the fall of a stone from heaven was impossible, and preferred to doubt all the reports of witnesses and to change their statements to conform with acknowledged scientific theories. Following their lead, keepers in many museums of Europe discarded genuine meteorites as shameful relics of a superstitious past. It is an interesting fact that the preservation of the precious iron meteorite of Hraschina, which fell in 1751, is due to the protection given to it by the bishop of Zagreb's consistory; they collected the sworn statements of eyewitnesses and sent the document, together with the iron, to the Austrian emperor. Both came into the possession of the Vienna museum. The influence of this clerical report on the Hraschina fall went even further; it became one of the strongest weapons in the hand of the German physicist E.F.F. Chladni (1756-1827) when he began his fight against the scientific authorities who ridiculed belief in meteorites. His paper of 1794, in which he defended the trustworthiness of this and of a few similar accounts and explained meteorites as pieces of cosmical matter that enter our atmosphere, marks the beginning of the science of meteoritics. Most of his colleagues remained skeptical, but a shower of stones that fell in 1803 at L'Aigle, not far from Paris, finally convinced the Paris academy and the rest of the scientific world of the reality of the fall of meteorites. From that time astronomers, physicists, chemists and mineralogists of many countries have contributed to knowledge of them (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1965).

Since hominoids can not be expected to fall from the blue on their own, as is the case with meteorites, I wish some pranky UFOnaut would dump a load of bigfeet on the heads of skeptics among modern academics.

References Cited

BAYANOV, DMITRI AND IGOR BOURTSEV
1976 On neanderthal vs. *Paranthropus*. *Current Anthropology*, 17(2):312-18.

DAHINDEN, RENÉ
1972 Need for international cooperation in search for relic hominoids. *Moscow News*, 5-12 February, 5(1100):6.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA
1965 Meteorites. In *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 15, pp. 272-77. Chicago: Encyclopeadia Britannica Inc.

LAWICH-GOODALL, JANE
1971 *In the shadow of man*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

PORSHNEV, BORIS F.
1968 The struggle for troglodytes. *Proster*, no. 7. Reprinted in *L'homme de Néaderthal est toujours vivant* by B. Heuvelmans and B. F. Porchnev, 1974, pp. 29-205. Paris: Plon.

1969 The problem of relic paleoanthropus. *Soviet Ethnography*, 2:115-30.

STRASENBURGH, GORDON R., JR.
1975 Perceptions and images of the wild man. *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes*, 9(2):281-98.